



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Head of the OSCE Mission to Skopje and the EU Special Representative to Macedonia

As delivered by Chargé d' Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 19, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

We also would like to warmly welcome Ambassador Radicati to the Permanent Council and also to thank Ambassador Fouéré for taking the time to keep us apprised of EU activities in one of its candidate countries. The OSCE Mission to Skopje has an outstanding track record in carrying out its mandate and in helping Macedonia to implement the provisions of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. Macedonia has certainly come a long way since the violence of 2001.

Ambassador Radicati, your report tracks very closely with our own views. The United States continues to support the ongoing political dialogue between the government and the largest ethnic Albanian political party, the DUI. We were disappointed with the DUI's decision to boycott parliament, which has left the party without a voice in the important decisions the country must take. We look to both sides in the dialogue to show flexibility and political maturity and to come rapidly to an agreement that ends this stalemate, which is hurting the country's image. The OSCE Mission deserves thanks for supporting efforts to bring this critical issue to closure.

My country also fully agrees with you, Ambassador Radicati, that the Rule of Law program should continue to be the Mission's top priority. While the necessary legislative changes have been adopted, implementation of judicial reform remains incomplete. The OSCE Mission is conducting crucial capacity-building activities in this area, together with its partners from other bilateral missions. We applaud the Mission's training to improve the capacity of Macedonia's judiciary, judges and prosecutors to handle serious crimes cases. Once the four unindicted ICTY case files are returned to Macedonia for processing by local authorities, we will need to look at mechanisms to allow the OSCE to effectively monitor this process, including potential trials, in accordance with Macedonian law and the mandate we have agreed with the ICTY. Our organization also might look to regional approaches or partners for best practices.

We strongly support the Mission's projects in the areas of combating organized crime, corruption and trafficking in persons—scourges that can hold Macedonia back in its aspirations toward Euro-Atlantic integration. The successful establishment of the Ombudsman is also due in no small part to OSCE assistance and capacity building.

My country also firmly supports the Mission's Police Development program. The police reform process is far from complete, but Macedonia is on the right track. The Mission's ongoing training of community and border police is helping to foster confidence between the communities and to create a more professional and transparent police force.

We also concur, Ambassador Radicati, with your view that the OSCE Mission should continue to gradually reduce its staff, and we support the Mission's recommendation to close the Mission's field station in Kumanovo by the end of the year, as we believe that important monitoring work in the Kumanovo area could be handled from the main office in Skopje. This also should allow the mission to focus greater resources and attention to the Rule of Law and Police Development programs which it has stated are the highest priorities. As the Mission continues to draw down, and Macedonia continues to make progress as a candidate for EU membership, we will look to increasing EU engagement to assist Macedonia to meet the requirements for eventual EU membership. Close U.S.-EU cooperation in helping Macedonia to realize its Euro-Atlantic aspirations will remain an important aspect of our work there, and we look forward to our continued work with Ambassador Fouéré in that regard.

The United States would again like to thank both distinguished ambassadors for their reports, and to wish them both all the best in their ongoing efforts to create a prosperous democratic future for the people of Macedonia.

Thank you.